Staff and Inmate Contact

517.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Interaction with inmates allows for continual assessment of the safety and security of the facility and the health and welfare of the inmates. However, inappropriate interaction can undermine security and order in the facility and the integrity of the supervision process.

This policy provides guidelines for appropriate and professional interaction between members and inmates, and is intended to promote high ethical standards of honesty, integrity and impartiality as well as increase facility safety, discipline and morale.

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Members who seek information or clarification about the interpretation of this policy are encouraged to promptly contact their supervisor.

517.2 POLICY

The Chief Deputy of Corrections shall ensure that inmates have adequate ways to communicate with staff and that the staff communicates and interacts with inmates in a timely and professional manner.

517.3 GENERAL CONTACT GUIDELINES

Members are encouraged to interact with the inmates under their supervision and are expected to take prompt and appropriate action to address health and safety issues that are discovered or brought to their attention.

All members should present a professional and command presence in their contact with inmates. Members shall address inmates in a civil manner. The use of profanity, and derogatory or discriminatory comments is strictly prohibited.

Written communication (e.g., request forms, inmate communication, grievances, rules infraction forms, disciplinary reports) shall be answered in a timely manner. Such communication shall be filed with the inmate’s records.

Members shall not dispense legal advice or opinions, or recommend attorneys or other professional services to inmates.

While profanity and harsh language are prohibited, the Office recognizes the necessity for staff to give inmates direction in a firm, determined, and authoritative manner in order to maintain proper supervision and control. Authoritative directions to inmates are particularly instructed when activities or events pose a threat to the safety or security of this facility.

517.4 ANTI-FRATERNIZATION

Personal or other interaction not pursuant to official duties between facility staff and current inmates, inmates who have been discharged within the previous year, their family members or

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known associates have the potential to create conflicts of interest and security risks in the work environment.

Members shall not knowingly maintain a personal or unofficial business relationship with any persons described in this section unless written permission is received from the Chief Deputy of Corrections.

Prohibited interactions include but are not limited to:

(a) Communications of a sexual or romantic nature.

(b) Salacious exchanges.

(c) Sexual abuse, sexual assault, sexual contact, or sexual harassment.

(d) Exchanging letters, phone calls, or other similar communications, such as texting.

(e) Exchanging money or other items.

(f) Extending privileges, giving or accepting gifts, gratuities, or favors.

(g) Bartering.

(h) Any financial transactions.

(i) Being present at the home of an inmate for reasons other than an official visit without reporting the visit.

(j) Providing an inmate with the staff member’s personal contact information, including social media accounts.

517.4.1 EXCEPTIONS

The Chief Deputy of Corrections may grant a written exception to an otherwise prohibited relationship on a case-by-case basis based upon the totality of the circumstance. In determining whether to grant an exception, the Chief Deputy of Corrections should give consideration to factors including, but not limited to:

- Whether a relationship existed prior to the incarceration of the inmate.
- Whether the relationship would undermine security and order in the facility and the integrity of the supervision process.
- Whether the relationship would be detrimental to the image and efficient operation of the facility.
- Whether the relationship would interfere with the proper discharge of, or impair impartiality and independence of, judgment in the performance of duty.

517.5 REPORTING

Members shall promptly report all attempts by inmates to initiate sexual acts or any salacious conversations, and forward any correspondence from an inmate or former inmate to the Chief Deputy of Corrections or the authorized designee.

Members shall report all attempts by inmates to intimidate or instill feelings of fear to their supervisor.

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Members shall promptly notify their immediate supervisors in writing if:

- A family member or close associate has been incarcerated or committed to the custody of the facility.
- The member is involved in a personal or family relationship with a current inmate or with an inmate who has been discharged within the previous year.

517.6 CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

Members shall follow all United States and Washington Constitutional requirements pertaining to custodial situations; including, but not limited to, search and seizure, access to counsel and interview and interrogation.

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